

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DACCA 00291 170149Z

44

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 0291

EO 11652: GDS

TAGAS: MASS, BG

SUBJ: FURTHER BDG APPROACHES ON SECURITY ASSISTANCE

REF: DACCA 0260

1. DURING JANUARY 12 RECEPTION AT RESIDENCE OF CHARGE IN HONOR OF SENATOR AND MRS. GEORGE MCGOVERN, DCMLA MAJOR GENERAL ZIA SPOKE BRIEFLY BUT SEPARATELY TO BOTH CHARGE AND SENATOR ABOUT NEED FOR ASSISTANCE IN INTERNAL SECURITY TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT.

2. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS DURING MEETINGS EARLIER THAT DAY AT MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SENATOR HAD REFERRED TO GROWING SENSE IN THE SENATE THAT MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO POOR COUNTRIES WAS CONSIDERED FUTILE AND WASTE, THAT U.S. ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE LIMITED TO HUMANITARIAN AID AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO JUSTIFY ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES DIVERTING SCARCE RESOURCES TO MILITARY PURCHASES. DURING EARLIER MISSION BRIEFING, SENATOR HAD BEEN ASKED IF HE COULD ASSIST OUR OWN PREVIOUS EFFORTS IN CONVEYING THIS MESSAGE TO BDG.

3. IT WOULD SEEM THAT PART BUT NOT ALL OF THE MESSAGE IS GETTING THROUGH. ZIA OPENED HIS LATEST APPROACH TO THE CHARGE BY SAYING, "I KNOW WHAT YOUR GOVERNMENT'S POLICY IS
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PAGE 02 DACCA 00291 170149Z

REGARDING MILITARY ASSISTANCE, BUT I WANT TO SPEAK NOW AS

THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND TO TALK OF OUR PROBLEMS WITH ARMED MISCREANTS." HE THEN WENT ON TO SAY HE WOULD LIKE TO SEND SOME SENIOR POLICE OFFICERS TO THE STATES TO LEARN, FOR EXAMPLE, HOW NEW CITY DEALS WITH WEAPON-CARRYING CRIMINALS. HE SAID THEY COULD ALSO USE SOME LIGHT EQUIPMENT THAT COULD ASSIST POLICE IN THESE EFFORTS. JUST BEFORE DEPARTING DACCA, SENATOR MCGOVERN TOLD CHARGE THAT ZIA HAD ALSO SPOKEN TO HIM IN SAME VEIN, AND REPORTEDLY DCMLA COMMODORE KHAN HAD RAISED SIMILAR NEEDS, BUT PRESUMABLY WITH COAST GUARD ANGLE, IN SEPARATE CONVERSATION ALSO AT CHARGE'S RESIDENCE WITH THE VISITING SECRETARY OF THE U.S. SENATE, FRANK VALEO.

4. COMMENT: TO PUT THIS IN PERSPECTIVE, BDG'S RECENT REPRESENTATIONS IN BEHALF OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE HAVE NOT ONLY BEEN DIRECTED TO US AND UK MISSIONS IN DACCA BUT TO A NUMBER OF OTHERS AS WELL, EVEN INCLUDING THE ITALIANS WHO HAVE BEEN ASKED FOR BOATS. THE GENERAL IMPRESSION IF THAT THEY ARE WILLING TO PAY IF ASSISTANCE IS NOT OTHERWISE AVAILABLE, AND THAT THE CASH PROBABLY WILL COME FROM FRIENDLY ARAB GOVERNMENTS. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, THE NEED FOR TRANSPORT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED BY BANGALEE MILITARY OFFICERS AS URGENT AND THEY HAVE STRESSED THAT LIGHT ARMS--NOW A HODGE-PODGE--SHOULD BE STANDARDIZED FOR BOTH PRACTICAL AND MORALE REASONS. BOTH TRANSPORT AND LIGHT ARMS WOULD BE EQUALLY USEFUL TO THE MILITARY AND INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES.

5. WE BELIEVE THERE IS NO NEED FOR US TO RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY TO THIS APPROACH AT THIS TIME. THERE ARE OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPLY AND TRAINING AVAILABLE TO THE BANGALEES, E.G., THE UK AMONG OTHERS. IT IS OUR JUDGEMENT THT OUR ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION TO BANGLADESH'S STABILITY BEST AND MOST APPROPRIATELY SERVES OUR LARGER POLITICAL INTERESTS AND OBVIATES, AT LEAST PRESENTLY, ANY NEED TO VENTURE INTO THE SENSITIVE AREA OF SUPPORT FOR INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES. BOSTER

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